

2005 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Risk Behaviors of Montana Youth

Who Participate in Healthy Lifestyles

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Prepared for

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The Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction every two years to 7th and 8th grade students and to high school students. The purpose of the survey is to help monitor the prevalence of behaviors that not only influence youth health, but also put youth at risk for the most significant health and social problems that can occur during adolescence. While all schools in Montana can participate in the survey on a volunteer basis, approximately 50 high schools are randomly selected to be included with high schools from other states for national data and reports.

The 2005 YRBS was conducted in February of 2005 with 9,178 7th and 8th grade students and 10,259 high school students. This represents approximately 38 percent of all 7th and 8th grade students and 21 percent of all high school students in Montana. Schools administering the survey were provided with detailed written instructions on conducting a random survey in their schools. To encourage accurate responses to sensitive questions, a strict protocol was implemented to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participating students.

Regular physical activity reduces people's risk for heart attack, colon cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure and may reduce their risk of stroke. It also helps control weight; contributes to healthy bones, muscles, and joints; reduces falls among older adults; helps to relieve the pain of arthritis; reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression; and is associated with fewer hospitalizations; physician visits, and medications. Despite the proven benefits of physical activity, more than 50 percent of adults in the United States do not get enough physical activity to provide health benefits. Insufficient physical activity is not limited to adults. More than a third of young people grades 9-12 do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity. Moreover, participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to 28 percent in 2003 (Centers for Disease Control, 2004).

Research shows that good nutrition can help to lower people's risk for many chronic diseases, including heart diseases, stroke, some cancers, diabetes, and osteoporosis. However, a large gap remains between recommended dietary patterns and what Americans actually eat. For example, in 2003, only about one-fourth of adults in the United States ate the recommended five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day. Poor eating habits are often established during childhood. In 2005, less than 5 percent of Montana high school youth reported eating the recommended five or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day (Centers for Disease Control and Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2005 YRBS).

Survey Validity and Limitations

Data used in this report from the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey are not based on a random survey. It would not be valid to generalize the findings from this survey to all 7th and 8th grade and high school students in Montana. It is only valid to attribute the results of this survey to the students who reported their behaviors in response to the items in the questionnaire. In addition, respondents in self-reported surveys may have a tendency to underreport behaviors that are socially undesirable, unhealthy, or illegal (alcohol consumption, drug use, seat belt non-usage, etc.) and overreport behaviors that are socially desirable (amount of exercise, etc.).

Survey Results

For the purposes of the report, youth are classified as having healthy lifestyles if they reported being physically active for at least 60 minutes on at least three of the seven days prior to taking the survey and that they ate fruit at least four to six times during the seven days prior to taking the survey. Ten separate risk behaviors associated with violence, sexual behavior, tobacco use and alcohol and other drug use were investigated for association with healthy lifestyles. These risk behaviors are listed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Results of the investigation indicate the following:

- **Montana youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely to have used/abused alcohol in the past 30 days than youth who live healthy lifestyles.**

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (48 percent vs. 43 percent) to have had a drink of alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey than students who live healthy lifestyles.

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (19 percent vs. 16 percent) to have driven a car after drinking alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey than students who live healthy lifestyles.

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (34 percent vs. 31 percent) to have been involved in binge drinking (five or more drinks of alcohol in a row) in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

Montana 7th and 8th graders who do not live healthy lifestyles were, for the most part, similar to those students who live healthy lifestyles in alcohol use/abuse.

- **Montana youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely to have smoked on one or more of the past 30 days than youth who live healthy lifestyles.**

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (27 percent vs. 19 percent) than students who live healthy lifestyles to have smoked cigarettes on one or more of the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana 7th and 8th graders who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (13 percent vs. 9 percent) to have smoked cigarettes on one or more of the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely to have used marijuana in the past 30 days than youth who live healthy lifestyles.**

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (20 percent vs. 17 percent) than students who live healthy lifestyles to have used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana 7th and 8th graders who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (9 percent vs. 7 percent) to have used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey than high school students who live healthy lifestyles.

- **Montana youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely to have sniffed glue or used inhalants during their life than youth who live healthy lifestyles.**

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (16 percent vs. 12 percent) than students who live healthy lifestyles to have sniffed glue or used inhalants in their lifetime. Similarly, Montana 7th and 8th graders who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (16 percent vs. 13 percent) to have sniffed glue or used inhalants in their lifetime.

- **Montana youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely to be sexually active than youth who live healthy lifestyles.**

Montana high school youth who do not live healthy lifestyles are more likely (31 percent vs. 28 percent) than students who live healthy lifestyles to have had sexual intercourse during the three months prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who live healthy lifestyles are more likely to think of themselves as about the right weight than youth who do not live healthy lifestyles.**

Montana high school youth who live healthy lifestyles are more likely (61 percent vs. 51 percent) than students who do not live healthy lifestyles to think of themselves as about the right weight. Similarly, Montana 7th and 8th graders who live healthy lifestyles are more likely (62 percent vs. 55 percent) to think of themselves as about the right weight.

For many of the risk categories, Montana youth who do not live healthy lifestyles reported placing themselves at higher risk for negative health consequences from undesirable behaviors than youth who live healthy lifestyles. While the difference in risk behaviors between the two groups is not dramatic, the association exists for high school students in nearly every behavior risk category examined. The differences in risk behaviors for the two groups are less apparent with Montana 7th and 8th grade students. In some instances this may be related to age. For example, many 7th and 8th grade students do not have a license to drive a vehicle and could not place themselves at risk for driving a vehicle after drinking.

Table 1
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Healthy Lifestyles vs. Non-Healthy Lifestyles
Montana 7th and 8th Grade Students

Health Risk Behavior	Healthy Lifestyles	Non-Healthy Lifestyles
Had at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (Q41)	22.5%	23.1%
Drove a car when drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (Q11)	5.9%	5.7%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 days (Q42)	11.2%	12.2%
Smoked on one or more days during the past 30 days (Q30)	8.5%	12.8%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days (Q36)	6.1%	6.6%
Used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days (Q46)	7.0%	9.2%
Sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high during their life (Q50)	13.0%	15.9%
Had sexual intercourse during the past three months (Q60)	8.6%	8.2%
Had been in at least one fight during the past 12 months (Q18)	41.9%	40.7%
Actually attempted suicide during the past 12 months (Q26)	12.1%	12.2%
Tend to think of themselves as about the right weight (Q64)	61.7%	54.9%

Figure 1
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Healthy Lifestyles vs. Non-Healthy Lifestyles
Montana 7th and 8th Grade Students

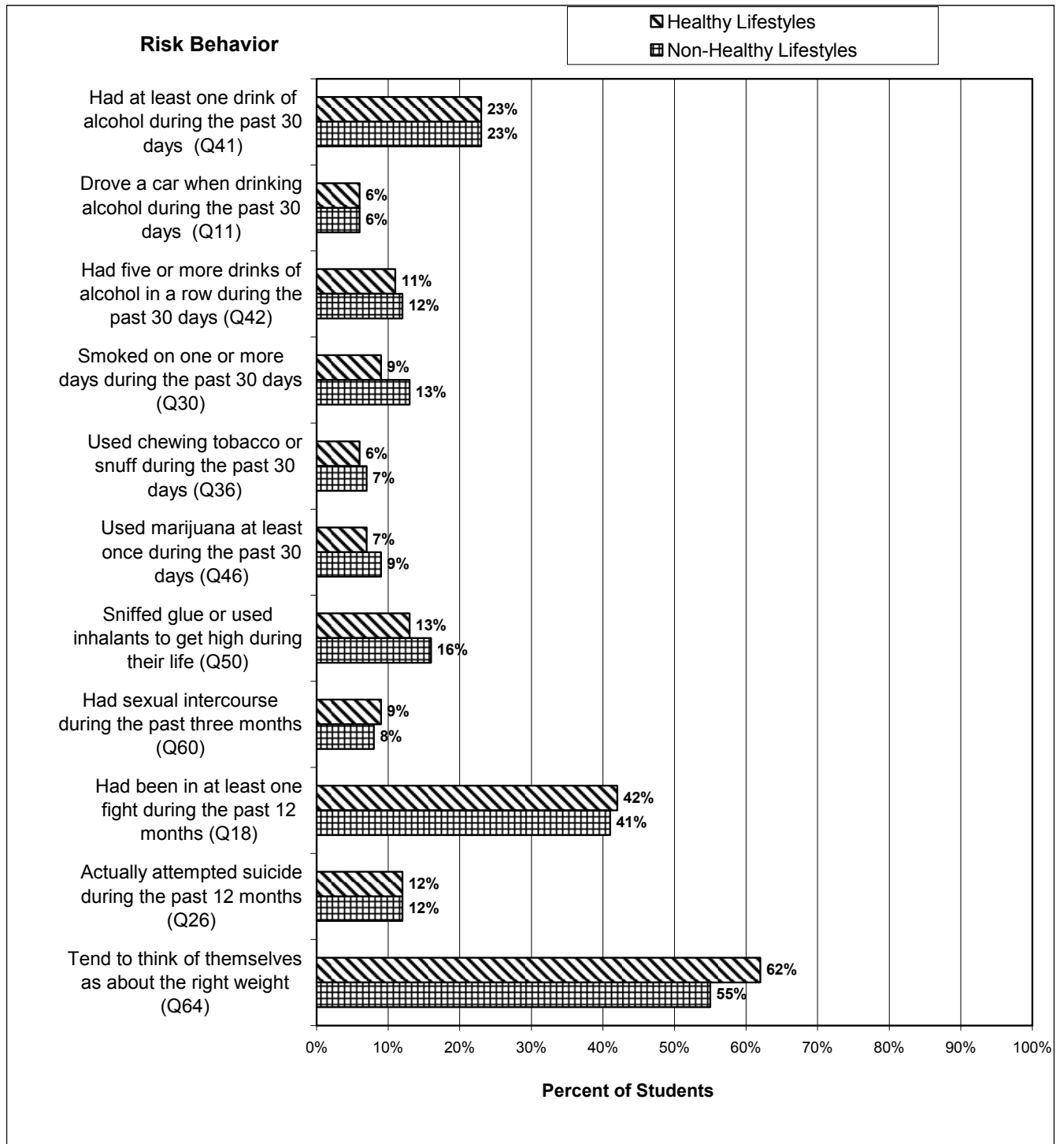


Table 2
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Healthy Lifestyles vs. Non-Healthy Lifestyles
Montana High School Students

Health Risk Behavior	Healthy Lifestyles	Non-Healthy Lifestyles
Had at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (Q41)	43.1%	47.6%
Drove a car when drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (Q11)	16.2%	19.1%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 days (Q42)	30.9%	33.5%
Smoked on one or more days during the past 30 days (Q30)	18.6%	26.7%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days (Q36)	15.6%	14.8%
Used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days (Q46)	16.6%	20.2%
Sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high during their life (Q50)	11.5%	15.5%
Had sexual intercourse during the past three months (Q60)	27.7%	30.5%
Had been in at least one fight during the past 12 months (Q18)	30.4%	29.2%
Actually attempted suicide during the past 12 months (Q26)	11.6%	12.7%
Tend to think of themselves as about the right weight (Q64)	60.9%	51.7%

Figure 2
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Healthy Lifestyles vs. Non-Healthy Lifestyles
Montana High School Students

